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The Missionary Movement of the Non-Historical Groups in Latin America

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PART III

Of the Study Conference on the

MESSAGE OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH IN LATIN AMERICA

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A paper by
Dr. Kenneth Strachan
General Director of the
Latin American Mission, Inc.
San José, Costa Rica

Committee on Cooperation in Latin America
Of the Division of Foreign Missions of the
National Council of the Churches of Christ
in the U.S.A.
156 Fifth Avenue New York 10, N.Y.

The Missionary Movement of the Non-Historical Groups in Latin America

The extraordinary growth of that wing of the Protestant missionary enterprise which is not officially linked with the historic or traditional denominations has brought about a significant change in the evangelical situation in Latin America today. Variously referred to as the non-historical, evangelical or fundamentalist groups or sometimes dismissed as "fringe sects" (their multiplicity and heterogeneous character make the finding of any adequate designation well-nigh impossible), the movement represented by these bodies has grown to such proportions that it can no longer be ignored. For good or ill, non-historical Protestantism has become one of the determining influences affecting the spiritual future of Latin America.

Whether the expansion of these groups is considered as a serious cause for concern or primarily a problem of cooperation or merely as a field of inquiry for those engaged in the task of appraising missionary methods, a more careful study and evaluation is highly advisable. Fundamentalist bodies and their leaders need to know much more of the movement of which they form a part – see it in an over-all perspective – in order that they may effectively address themselves to the crucial problems and challenge of their particular situation in Latin America today. Such a study will also be helpful to the so-called historic denominations in planning their programs for the future and in tackling the inescapable problems of relationship and cooperation with these younger and in some cases more vigorous groups.

Therefore the decision of the Committee on Cooperation in Latin America to include such a subject in its agenda for the Fall Meeting of 1957 is heartily applauded and the opportunity extended to this representative of the non-historical wing to present the case for the movement is both appreciated and welcomed.

Research facilities on the field are not of the best, and statistical and factual data covering some of the newer groups none too plentiful. [1] Nevertheless it is hoped that in spite of these and other obvious limitations, this paper may serve to contribute something to a better understanding of these groups and focus upon their potential participation in the growing task of world evangelism and in the life of that historic community of Christ to which, in spite of their differences, they belong.

It would be well before going any farther to attempt to indicate what elements make up that branch which has been designated as non-historical. Bishop Lesslie Newbigin [2] recognizes a stream of Christian tradition which, for want of a better term, he calls Pentecostal. Sweet in his "Story of Religion in America" refers to the Fundamentalist movement which emerged early in the 20th century as an organized attempt to preserve the authoritarian position of historic Christianity against the rising tide of Modernism.

Whether the term "Pentecostal" as used by Newbigin and "Fundamentalist" can be equated or not (they probably cannot), the fact is that both apply to that growing sector of Protestant Christianity which is largely outside of the Catholic and Orthodox Protestant traditions delineated by Newbigen. But neither is coextensive with it. Under this general division are lumped a wider diversity of groups.

Included are the many Pentecostal churches with their fervency and emphasis on the gifts of the Spirit. They represent an important element, but only a part. Another vigorous element is the constituency – largely independent or non-denominational – which has grown from the Bible Institute and the Bible Conference movement. Still another is represented by numerous small denominational bodies washed up on the shores of America by successive waves of immigration or left in the eddy of some past historical or doctrinal dividing of waters. In more recent years the fundamentalist-modernist tension in the larger churches has given rise to various

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(1) Acknowledgement is gladly made of the invaluable information obtained from the Missionary Research Library's bulletins.

(2) Lesslie Newbigin – The Household of God. Friendship Press, New York 1953. P. 94 ff.

new denominations cast in the patterns of the old but having severed the links thereof. These and many others must be included in this category, and as would be expected, its members range from enthusiasts and extremists on the fringes to the more balanced and mature Christians of the center. And in a study of this sort it is important to keep that in mind.

It has only been in the post-war years that the rapid expansion of these groups has attracted attention. Much of their missionary effort post-dates the Second World War. But it would be a mistake to assume that the movement has no history and to dismiss it as being of very recent origin.

Many of the early pioneers of Protestant missions in Latin America were men not linked with the historic denominations. One of the very earliest of formal missionary efforts was that launched by Captain Allen Francis Gardner who, unable to interest the Church Missionary Society or the Moravians or the Scotch Presbyterians, founded the Patagonian Missionary Society (later the South American Missionary Society) and following initial unsuccessful efforts in Patagonia (1845) and Bolivia (1847) laid the foundations for future work even at the cost of his own life in Tierra del Fuego in 1851.

In the years that followed, his own son and grandson, and W. Barbrooke Grubb and other members of that Society pioneered work among the Araucanian Indians in Chile and the Indians of the Paraguayan and Argentine Chacos and even among the whites of Argentina – all this well before the twentieth century.

The name of Dr. Robert Reid Kalley occupies an honored place in Brazilian history. Working independently, he organized the first evangelical church in Brazil in 1855 and then went on in 1892 to found the Help for Brazil Mission which later merged with two other similar groups working in Argentina and Peru to become the Evangelical Union of South America – a "faith" mission which today has over 170 British and North American missionaries.

In the last decade of the nineteenth century independent or non-denominational bodies were actively establishing beach-heads all over Latin America. Plymouth Brethren missionaries, working at secular jobs in the tradition of St. Paul, were spreading out in the principal cities. Some of the largest evangelical congregations in Buenos Aires today are of Brethren persuasion. The Christian

and Missionary Alliance, organized ten years before, was opening work in Ecuador, Peru, Chile and Argentina, and not long after in Colombia and Puerto Rico as well.

To the Gospel Missionary Union, organized in Kansas City, Missouri, fell the honor of sending the first missionary to enter the Republic of Eduador. W. E. Reed, who later joined the Christian and Missionary Alliance, entered in 1896. In Bolivia, George Allan, originally with the Canadian Baptist Mission, was founding the Bolivian Indian Mission (1907) with a view to reaching the Quechuas. In the meantime, the Central American Mission, founded by Dr. C. I. Scofield in 1890, was pioneering the Gospel in Central America. With the exception of Guatemala, where the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. had entered previously at the invitation of the President and the Moravians among the Mesquitos in Nicaragua, all the Central American republics were first occupied for the Gospel by this "faith" missionary society.

It was during the early years of the Twentieth Century that Pentecostal teaching began to spread around the world. In Chile around the year 1910 a Methodist missionary, W. C. Hoover, moved by that teaching, was instrumental in beginning a movement that swept the country. Today, less than fifty years later, the Pentecostalists in Chile number almost half a million adherents – the fastest-growing and most influential Protestant body in the Republic.

This extraordinary growth of Pentecostalism was paralleled to a lesser degree in some of the other republics, notably Mexico, Argentina and Puerto Rico. But nowhere was it more successful than in Brazil. Today the Pentecostal churches of Brazil have an active membership of over 300,000.

(What lessons does this movement offer our other more conservative, more stable and incidentally more static groups? What would God seek to teach us from the fact, for instance, that the small band of fanatics who were forced out of their church in Valparaiso, Chile, back there in 1910 have today multiplied to over 70,000 active church members, while the body that bid them go can muster a bare 6000?)

One other datum worthy of note in this brief sketch of the history of the non-historical Protestant movement, is the extraordinary increase of missionary activity in the years following World War II.

Characteristic of this expansion was the impressive, yet dismaying, multiplication of agencies. Small denominational groups that had once channeled their missionary interest through existing agencies, now began their own programs.

Others, previously engaged in other parts of the world, were induced by the disruptions of the war to turn their attention to Latin America as well. New denominations, the result of the theological tensions within the older established bodies, also launched their missionary enterprises. Organizations in the homeland, engaged in specialized ministries, went international and likewise extended their activities to the mission field. New independent agencies sprang up, and scores of individuals, not to be left behind but suspicious of any organization, also joined the missionary rush to Latin America and settled here and there as free-lance operators.

The dimensions of this outburst of missionary zeal are illustrated on a world-wide scale by the figures presented by Frank W. Price and Kenyon E. Moyer[3] which reveal that while the historical boards linked with the Division of Foreign Missions were sending out 631 additional recruits between the years 1952 and 1956, the other groups were registering a jump of 4172!

To affirm that God was not in this upsurge of missionary interest would be to deny the working of the Holy Spirit. But that is not to claim that the movement was free from human failure. It was both a movement of God and a movement of man, and one of the major tasks confronting its leaders today is to revise the human in the light of the divine.

A brief survey of its size is first in order. For lack of sufficient information it is impossible in this paper to take properly into consideration the non-North American missionary agencies and their established churches. But with reference primarily to non-historical groups emanating from North America we can divide them into six major groupings and it will be helpful to our understanding of the movement if we do so.

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[3] A Study of American Protestant Foreign Missions in 1956. Occasional Bulletin, Nov. 16, 1956. Missionary Research Library. P. 2.

1 – *Groups belonging to the Evangelical Foreign Missions Association.* Missionary arm of the National Association of Evangelicals, this Association brings together some 47 denominational, semi-denominational and independent bodies, with a total staff of 4662 [4] North American missionaries scattered throughout the world. There are 34 E.F.M.A. societies working in Latin America and the West Indies, with a total missionary staff of 1161. Typical groups: The Christian and Missionary Alliance, the Assemblies of God, the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society, World Radio Missionary Fellowship (HCJB).

2 – *The Interdenominational Foreign Mission Association* – which brings together the so-called "faith" or independent boards – with 36 member societies and some 6859 [5] missionaries. There are 18 I.F.M.A. societies engaged in the Latin American and West Indies fields, with a total of 2066 missionaries. The Evangelical Union of South America, Wycliffe Bible Translators, The Evangelical Alliance Mission, and the Central American Mission are some of its larger societies. The society to which the writer belongs also has the privilege of belonging to this Association.

3 – *Associated Missions of the International Council of Christian Churches.* Representing the ultra-conservative wing of Fundamentalism, it is made up of 11 member societies and 1,079 [6] foreign missionaries. The six or seven of its societies working in Latin America and the West Indies muster approximately 350 missionaries.

4 – *Independent Denominational Missionary Agencies not Affiliated with any Association.* Price and Moyer [7] list 21 such boards.

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[4] Missionary Report – March 31, 1957

[5] Statistical Report, October 1, 1956. Included in these figures are all foreign missionary forces including non-North American and accepted candidates which are presumably now on the field.

[6] Price and Moyer – A Study of American Protestant Foreign Missions in 1956. P. 11. Several small societies have recently increased the number.

[7] Ibid. P. 12

The largest of these is the Foreign Board of the Southern Baptist Convention with 1,032 missionaries, 406[8] of which are serving in Latin America. Of the societies listed in this group which could properly be included in the movement we have been studying, perhaps they have only about 150 missionary representatives in Latin America.

5 – *Independent Non-denominational Agencies not Affiliated with any Association.* Price and Moyer [9] here list 34 such agencies, to which could be added the names of several others.[10] Based on such data as is available, it is calculated conservatively that there are at least 350 missionaries of these groups working in Latin America and the West Indies.

6 – *Independent or Free-lance Missionaries.* In this category must be included Plymouth Brethren, many of whom are doing excellent work and who according to the World Christian Handbook of 1952 numbered 304 in Latin America alone. To these must be added scores – impossible to list – who are to be found in every country. Given the increased Plymouth Brethren missionary activity in the last ten years plus the influx of free-lancers, it is the writer's opinion that a figure of 500 for all these independent missionaries is not too high.

The following chart may give an idea of the distribution of missionary personnel of the non-historical groups. Based upon figures supplied by the annual reports of the I.F.M.A. and E.F.M.A., Missionary Research Library bulletins, and such other data as was available, it makes no claim to be strictly accurate but should furnish a picture of the relative strength of this movement in Latin America.

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[8] The Convention's 1957 report brings the number up to 441.

[9] Price and Moyer P. 13.

[10] See Appendix A

AREA	IFMA	EFMA	AMICC	Ind. Non-Den.	Ind. Denom.	Free Lance	Totals
Mexico	269	39	4	9		8	329
Central America	298	219	8	33		15	573
West Indies	247	242	32	78		83	682
Argentina	41	49		24		61	175
Bolivia	169	67		28		26	290
Brazil	168	130	206	86		29	619
Chile	38	39	24			9	110
Colombia	62	101	2	18			183
Ecuador	92	161				6	259
Guianas	16	5	8	6		11	46
Paraguay	3	8		21		13	45
Peru	248	57	48			12	365
Uruguay	9	15		27		13	45
Venezuela	173	62	35	18		18	306
Gen. Estimate					150	200	350
Accepted candidates	233	90					323
	2066	1284	367	348	150	504	4719

Judged by the number of personnel employed (and this may be supported by other factors as well), it would seem that the fundamentalist or non-historic movement is strongest in Central America, Panama, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. In Mexico, the Caribbean, Brazil, Chile and the River Plate republics, the historic groups are unquestionably stronger.

However, not too much should be deduced or concluded from the figures lined up above. They give no picture of the strength of the national churches established by these bodies. As might be expected the newer the group, the younger and more inexperienced their missionaries and the smaller and less organized their churches. Some of the societies are laudably concentrating on Indian tribes hitherto unreached. It would not be fair to demand of them at this stage large established national churches. If the Commission includes those of "every tribe" then it is to the everlasting credit of these fundamentalist agencies that they have given themselves to the slow and unrewarding task of reaching the primitive Indians of Latin America.

Neither do these figures give any indication as to the soundness of their missionary operations or their promise for the future. Time and the judgment of the Lord of the harvest alone will reveal the quality and permanency of the work that is being done.

But one fact does stand out. Today the non-historic groups in Latin America muster more than 4500 missionaries (we do not be-

lieve the figures to be exaggerated), and if we assume the presence of a total force of around 6000 [11], then we come to the astonishing discovery that approximately 75% of all the Protestant missionary forces engaged in Latin America and the West Indies belong outside the traditional streams of Christianity! Whatever may be thought of their message or their methods, for good or ill, they stand to play a decisive part in the future of Protestantism in Latin America. For that reason alone, if for no other, the movement must be taken into consideration.

If the above representation has been fair to the facts, then the question arises, How account for the rapid growth and expansion of these groups? That is surely one of the first questions to which we must seek an answer. It would be gratifying if such growth could be claimed as the inevitable result of the truth of their message and methods. There are some who would like to think so. Unfortunately for such a thesis, some non-Christian sects are experiencing equal and even greater success.

What factors, then, may be considered to have contributed to this mushroom growth? Many reasons may be advanced, but in our judgment there is one and only one factor that accounts for it.

It would seem that the growth of each group is related directly to its effectiveness in mobilizing its total membership in continuous evangelistic endeavor, regardless of its particular doctrinal emphasis or methods or church polity or denominational distinctives. This is borne out by a consideration of the various types of sects (non-Christian as well as Christian) that are successfully multiplying themselves. There is a marked difference in the message, emphasis and methods of Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostalists, Baptistic groups and Independent Fundamentalists – to take several groups at random. But they are all growing rapidly. They are alike only – and their success stems from it – in their intensive evangelistic activity. Whether it be a Communist, a Jehovah's Witness, a Fundamentalist or a blue-blooded denominationalist, the law of sowing applies equally to all: "He which

(11) Price and Moyer turn up a total of 5121 for 1956 but if to these be added the Plymouth Brethren and other independent missionaries (see p. 10) and the increase in IFMA and EFMA personnel (IFMA lists 204 accepted candidates for Latin America in 1956 alone), then we believe a figure of 6000 is not far off.

soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.''

Emerging out of this emphasis on evangelistic responsibility and success in mobilizing the total membership, several other contributing factors must be recognized. One is the consequent individual initiative that is characteristic of the membership of these groups. Unhampered by excessive organizational machinery and undeterred by too great a knowledge of the proprieties of ecclesiastical order, the fundamentalist is quick to see new fields of work and to enter in.

The same sense of evangelistic responsibility and freedom of individual action is put to good use in the homeland in promoting the missionary enterprise. The responsibility for world-wide evangelism is thrust upon every church member to be discharged either by personal missionary endeavor or specific prayer intercession and personalized support. The case for missions may be over-simplified and dramatized; the techniques of modern advertising and huckstering too easily and slavishly imitated, but aggressive promotion of the missionary enterprise arising out of that same evangelistic zeal has been another of the contributing factors to the rapid growth of the non-historical boards.

This same evangelistic zeal has lent a vitality to the message and a warmth to the life and fellowship of these groups. The message preached may very well be overly simple, it may show no proper appreciation of history or social conditions or of the complex age in which we live, but it is dynamic. And to the simple servant-maid, the humble workman, the burdened housewife, and even the better educated, sitting in crowded halls, it comes with the authority of divine sanction, commanding their assent and drawing them into the fellowship and witness of the group.

To those brought up in the cloistered shelter of a respectable time-hallowed tradition it may pose a baffling question as to why groups which they consider deficient, shallow and extremist should nevertheless prosper and grow. The answer seems to be that God is no respecter of persons. He is not willing that any should perish. He will have the good news of redemption proclaimed to every creature. He will do it through faulty and defective instruments if He can find no others. He prefers imperfect and immature but living witnesses to impeccably orthodox and correct but slumbering church members.

If this evangelistic zeal and activity is the key to the success of these movements, it also helps to explain some of the apparent weaknesses and defects which at times are so irritating to its critics. One of the criticisms most commonly launched against it is the superficial character of its preaching. With its appeal to the emotions and its reliance on the sensational – it is charged – the fundamentalist message does not do justice to the Gospel and fails to command the attention and acceptance of the middle and professional classes.

It should not be forgotten that a more sophisticated, worldly-wise presentation of Christianity has somehow never in the history of preaching been associated with a dynamic and successful propagation of the faith. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians do not represent a brief for ignorance or prejudice or fanaticism, but they do draw a clear line between a simplicity that is honored of God even though it seem foolishness to the world, and a sophistry that, however much it may appeal to the senses, is in the long run fruitless and of no enduring account.

Nevertheless, there is much that is valid in the criticism and much needs to be done to give greater depth and breadth to the preaching of these groups.

It is a common tendency in non-historical circles to belittle and neglect the important task of education, and this also derives from the emphasis on evangelism. In their stress on the evangelization of every creature they have ignored that other equally important aspect of the Great Commission, to teach. In part, this is explained as a reaction against what Evangelicals considered the failure of the educational institutions set up by the historic denominations on the mission field. Nevertheless, it is undeniable that one of the most serious problems facing the whole non-historical movement today is its widespread deficiency in the field of education – its lack of a well-trained national leadership. Bible Institutes, of which there are an abundance, with their low academic standards, are not meeting the need, and everywhere among these groups the necessity of intensified education – both secular and Christian – is urgently felt, or should be!

This emphasis on evangelism is also back of the slowness of some of these groups to establish properly organized churches with a clear sense of order and well-defined polity and worship. Out of

this deficiency arises also a certain backwardness in tackling the problem of effective partnership with the national church and its leaders.

It is not too much to affirm that this is one of the most crucial problems facing the non-historical groups today. Essential to their continued growth and the permanency of their movement is the establishment of a strong national church. And it is perhaps here that the historical churches have much to contribute if some way can be found to make their superior tradition and experience available.

Perhaps the greatest weakness charged against the movement, however, is the isolationist mode of existence and work which characterizes so many, but fortunately not all, of the groups. Officially they have almost nothing to do with the historical bodies, and tragically, equally little to do with each other. In the heat of their evangelistic enthusiasm and in the pursuit of their separate immediate objectives, they may not be conscious of its effects upon the fellowship within their own circles, or what is more serious and pronounced, its disastrous effects upon the thinking of the observant peoples around them. But such an independent, self-sufficient, pseudo-absolutism can have no other final effect than to condemn them permanently to the role of "fringe sects" – made up of good, worthy, spiritual Christian people serving some purpose as a corrective to the Christian Church at large, but failing to attain the full-orbed life and fellowship of the mature Body in Christ.

It is difficult to defend the movement against this charge. Unfortunately the situation today is such as to evoke words of exhortation such as the following by Bishop Newbigen:

> "When we see – as we do see – a multiplicity of bodies, each claiming to be a fellowship based upon the common sharing in the Holy Spirit, yet denying any binding obligations toward one another, and apparently without any sense of shame about such a situation, and sometimes even proud of it, must we not say bluntly: 'Brethren, you deceive yourselves. This fissiparation, this proliferation of mutually irresponsible sects, is not a work of the Spirit but of the flesh. In your emphasis upon the primacy of the Spirit and upon the fact that the Church is intended

to be a Spirit-filled fellowship in which the Spirit's gifts are known and enjoyed and used for the edification of the Church and for witness to the world, you are right. But you are wrong in severing the Spirit from the Body, in forgetting that as there is one Spirit so there is one Body, and that the first and most excellent fruit of the Spirit is the charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and is glad to suffer for His Body's sake, which is the Church.' " (12)

On the other hand there are some evidences of a growing change of attitude, at least in the relationship of these groups to each other. The major Pentecostal bodies have shown in recent years a marked reversal in favor of comity and cooperation. The Evangelical Foreign Missions and the Interdenominational Foreign Mission Associations are doing much among their respective members to bring them together. The existence of the Pan American Christian Network in the field of radio and LEAL in the field of literature also are pointing the way to greater cooperation and fellowship in days to come.

The matter of fellowship and cooperation with the historic groups, however, is a more delicate problem since it involves deep-lying doctrinal convictions and brings up the history of past difficulties and the question of ecclesiastical relationships.

Between each side there is a wide gulf of reserve and distrust, and it cannot be bridged merely by sentimental words of good will. Each side feels the other to have offended, each is concerned with the failure of the other regarding some aspects of the faith, life and order of the Church of Christ. Neither seems to be particularly conscious of its own sins. For the majority of those belonging to the non-historical groups, the whole question is a vital matter of conscience and any efforts to heal the breach must deal adequately with the problems which have brought about an offended conscience. At the same time, there is an increasing unease among fundamentalists (it has been called "the uneasy conscience of modern fundamentalism") that is bringing many to recognize the possibility that the evangelical conscience regarding these fundamentals of faith, life and order may be too much imbued by the prejudices of Pharisaism.

(12) Lesslie Newbigin. Op. cit. P. 120

In spite of our differences and deficiencies we must recognize each other as members of the Body of Christ. Our failure to do so can have no other result than to drive each to extremes. It is all too easy to tag our brethren as apostates and thus completely write them off. It is equally easy to dismiss them because not properly related to the external bodies of the Christian Church.

Those belonging to established churches must face the fact, as Newbigin has aptly put it [13]

> "that a body may have all the outward form of a Church and preach the true doctrine of the Church, and yet be dead; and on the other hand, that the living Spirit can and does give His own life to bodies which lack in some manner and measure the fulness of the Church's true order and teaching. And when He does so, when we are confronted with the manifest tokens of the Spirit's presence, we must, as the apostles did, accept the fact. We must 'hold our peace and glorify God' (Acts 11:18 cf. 15:12). There must be no evasion of this, no talk of 'uncovenanted mercies', no suggestion that we can acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit and yet deny the fullest Christian fellowship – as though our church rules were stricter than those of God Himself. Where God has 'made no distinction' (Acts 15:9) we ought to make none. Those whom God has sealed we may not reject without dishonoring God."

By the same token Pentecostals and Fundamentalists need to face the fact that though some segments of the Church may be asleep and have the appearance of death and so bring upon themselves as an inevitable consequence the judgment of God, they are not thereby rejected or abandoned by God. These dead bones shall live by the Spirit of God. Therefore, to quote Newbigin again, "a decisive mark of the Spirit's presence will be a tender concern for the unity of the body"[14] and for its health.

In the practical efforts that need to be taken in order to bridge the gulf that separates us in Latin America, it may be well to

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[13] Op. cit. P. 115

[14] Op. cit. P. 115

keep in mind the local, congregationalist frame of mind that characterizes the average representative of the newer groups. Instinctively suspicious of hierarchical authority and financially unable and constitutionally indisposed to build up top-heavy organizational structures, he will shy away from official cooperative commitments on a top level. But he is far more open to a less formal, more fluid form of cooperation on a local grass-roots level.

Proof of the fact is to found in the participation of these groups in national councils or associations in Latin America so long as these are not affiliated with international bodies. Examples for this can be cited in the Ministerial Associations made up of representatives of all groups to be found in practically every area of Latin America. It is more effectively illustrated by such national associations as the Concilio Nacional Evangélico de Perú, the Confederación Evangélica de Colombia and the Alianza Evangelica Costarricense, in which the majority of the non-historical groups are participating fully and freely with their other brethren.

Whether such contacts can be increased and the gulf bridged remains to be seen. It will prove no easy task, but two factors should encourage those burdened by the problem. One is the fact that the Latin American Protestant Church is overwhelmingly conservative and that therefore the area of potential agreement is perhaps greater there than in any other part of the world.

The second is the assurance of the ceaseless work of God's Spirit in the midst of the Churches – the Spirit of truth and righteousness and judgment, Whose voice will be heard, is even now being heard. "Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." And for the sake of our Lord, for the health of His Body, for the salvation of Latin America, lest we ourselves be cast away, we pray and work to the end that we may come to maturity in Christ, the whole body fitly joined together, edifying itself in love.

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We have sought in the course of this paper to focus upon the growth of the so-called non-historical groups, their position in Latin America today and the problems they face. For better or worse, they constitute a major factor in the determination of Latin America's Protestant future. The movement can spearhead the aggressive, stepped-up program of evangelism that is so urgently

needed to meet the challenge of an exploding population in the valley of revolutionary change. The movement can be used of God to infuse new life and vigor into older bodies that may have lost their vitality and momentum.

But it can also be instrumental in side-tracking the evangelical church down sterile by-paths of doctrinal extremes and religious oddities and tragically remove it from effective contact with the main stream of Latin American life. And it can so intensify and magnify its divisions as to make it hopelessly unable to resist and overcome the anti-Christian pressures that are building up in the world today.

It is our conviction that the direction this movement takes must be of utmost concern to the Christian Church at large. Whichever way it goes, the result will have an incalculable effect upon the Protestant cause in Latin America tomorrow. For that reason the non-historical groups represent a movement to be known and understood, to be prayed for and to be strengthened. The future of Evangelical work in Latin America is intimately bound up with theirs.

(See Appexdix A, Next page)

Additional Independent Non-denominational Organizations
Not Affiliated with any Association

Greater Mexican Missions, Inc.
Emil V. Aanderud, Director
Apdo. 7043, Mexico, D.F.

Union Bible Seminary Mission
Samuel J. Smith, Director
Cajon 1422, La Paz, Bolivia

Airmail from God (Mexico)
Niles Hoffman, Director
P.O. Box 2013,
Los Angeles 54, Calif.

Calvary Baptist Mission
Box 338, Vieques, Puerto Rico

Fundamental Gospel Mission
Mrs. Alexander H. Kerr, Vice Pres.
3440 Wilshire Blvd.,
Los Angeles, Calif.

Mathis Mennonite Mission
Mr. J. Weldon Mertin
Box 545, Mathis, Texas

Mennonite Brethren Gospel Mission
H. F. Thomas,
Rt. 3, Box 160, Mission, Texas

Mision de Amistad
Casilla 255, Asuncion, Paraguay

Mision Cristiana del Mexico Occidental
Gerald D. Bowlin
Apto. 150, Nogales, Sonora, Mexico

Mision Interdenominacional
Rdo. Bernardo Salazar
7a Av. 27-47, zona 8, Guatemala

Peruvian Mission
Niekles A. Cochram
Casilla 24, Huanta, Peru

United Brethren in Christ Mission
Mr. Archie M. Cameron
Apdo. 47, La Ceiba, Honduras